

212353US-0 PCT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF: :  
TOMOYASU NAKAMURA ET AL : ATTN: APPLICATION DIVISION  
SERIAL NO: NEW U.S. PCT APPLN :  
(BASED ON PCT/JP00/00733)  
FILED: HEREWITH :  
FOR: MASKING AGENT

4/14  
DR  
12/29/01

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

SIR:

Prior to examination on the merits, please amend the above-identified application as follows.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as shown on the marked-up copy following this amendment to read as follows.

4. (Amended) A masking agent according to claim 1, wherein the nontoxic salt of gluconic acid is an alkali metal salt or an alkali earth metal salt of gluconic acid.

5. (Amended) A method for masking flavor and/or odor particular to an oral ingestible product by adding a masking agent according to claim 1.